



## Press release: IOI Carbon Neutral Strategy

Intercultural Outreach Initiative (IOI), a leading nonprofit that empowers isolated communities to grow sustainably through educational travel, is excited to share its **2022 Carbon Negative Strategy**. This all-encompassing strategy is the natural extension of our current carbon-neutral initiative and involves all of our staff and office emissions, as well as those of our faculty-led study abroad programs and volunteering opportunities.

With this strategy we aim to further reduce our emissions and mitigate more than 100% of those emissions remaining. Our programmatic on-site emissions will be mitigated internally through our own conservation efforts. External emissions such as flights and shipping will be mitigated through collaboration with external programs. IOI will thereby become the first study abroad and volunteering organization to offer holistic carbon-negative opportunities, with measurable emissions and mitigation processes.

US president Kennedy once suggested, out of crisis can emerge new and incredible opportunities, particularly if traditional approaches and paradigms are questioned and challenged. As committed members of the international education community, we feel it's our responsibility to develop and explore novel approaches to neutralize the emissions caused by our activities. We are taking these challenging times to innovate and help lead the path towards a more sustainable industry.

IOI has been developing its mitigation strategy in two phases. The 1st phase leverages IOI's ongoing sustainable agriculture project in the Galapagos to offset our emissions. The project aims at increasing food sovereignty from continental Ecuador while reducing the carbon footprint of produce sent to the archipelago. Studies have calculated that each Kg of meat and vegetables imported to the Galapagos results in the emission of 50.73 gr of CO<sub>2</sub>. In an 18-month pilot, IOI's sustainable agriculture project has helped reduce the emission of 3546kg of CO<sub>2</sub>, or 3.5 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> - completely offsetting the emissions of our operational base in that location!

For the 2nd phase, IOI is implementing a reforestation program on Isabela's Island, where invasive species and unsustainable farming practices have diminished native trees. The second phase will offset the emissions of our staff and programmatic transportation.

Finally, IOI will contribute to key external mitigation projects in the region as needed, to offset air travel emissions, to complete its mitigation responsibilities.



Johann Besserer, IOI's Founder and Executive Director commented: " I was personally very inspired by the rise of the concept of sustainability over the past 10-15 years. I consider climate change THE challenge of the 21st century. Since we are among those training the leaders of tomorrow, the international education sector needs to lead by example in combating climate change."

When the SDGs replaced the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, IOI shifted both its long term aims as well as the concrete goals of our partnerships and programs to align with these new goals. We launched a Carbon Footprint Reduction strategy for Galapagos in mid-2018 as a means to target several ongoing issues. A sustainable agriculture program would reduce emissions from transport and the impacts on biosecurity from agricultural imports, increase public health through better nutrition, and boost the local economy by keeping tourism dollars on the island.

Last year, when reading a study done at White Oak Pastures cattle farm in Georgia, it struck me: They had gone carbon NEGATIVE - as a cattle farm! To actually achieve the overall intent of the SDGs, we need to do more than being carbon neutral. We need to reduce carbon already in the atmosphere to reduce the impacts of climate change we are already seeing."

IOI will also develop an easy-to-use online calculator that other international educational institutions and students will be able to calculate their CO2 emissions with, when traveling abroad. With our Carbon Calculator we want to help people take action. We hope that our simple, positive process will help everyone understand and take responsibility for their carbon emissions.



*About IOI: IOI is a leading nonprofit that empowers isolated communities to grow sustainably through educational travel. IOI has been running and managing projects since 2006 and has projects in Galapagos and Cuba. We provide international education programs that support the education, conservation, and social development of our host communities by assisting local institutions in sustainably handling the human-environmental intersection through financial and technical assistance*

*Our programs allow students and faculty to grow and learn through a variety of experiences including study abroad programs, volunteering opportunities, and internships experiences, whilst developing and implementing outreach projects with local institutions that strengthen these institutions to address pressing conservation, education, and social development needs. Please visit [www.ioi.ngo](http://www.ioi.ngo) for more information.*

Media enquiries:  
info@ioi.ngo